BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Amy Fern

"I required discipline in the room. I mean, like they can't chew gum in their class, and they know that. I set up the rules in the beginning—no gum chewing in class. And some of the rules they help me to decide what they could do and what they couldn't do, so we worked things out like that. So outside of that, I had pretty good kids. Some of the Samoan kids, yeah—there was one girl I remember who, I think, got a little bit out of hand. And so I took her aside and talked to her. And after that, it was okay. And at least one of the things that they mentioned was that I was fair with them. I could be strict, but I was fair with them. I could listen to them."

Amy Fern was born in Honolulu on October 11, 1909. She received her early education at Central Grammar School and later attended McKinley High School. After graduating from McKinley in 1928, she attended the University of Hawai'i, where she earned her teaching degree in 1933.

Fern spent her first two years as a teacher at Waimea High School on Kaua'i. She then taught for eight years at Farrington High School, eight years at Kūhiō Elementary School, and twelve years at Dole Intermediate School. She retired from full-time teaching in 1972.

Tape Nos. 21-9-1-91 and 21-10-1-91

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Amy Fern (AF)

February 28, 1991

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Joe Rossi (JR)

JR: This is an interview with Amy Fern, conducted February 28, 1991, in her Honolulu home. The interviewer is Joe Rossi.

Mrs. Fern, to begin with, could you tell me where and when you were born?

AF: I was born in Honolulu, October 11, 1909.

JR: Whereabouts in Honolulu?

AF: I was born in a maternity hospital, I know. I think that was the beginning---I mean, I think it was Kapi'olani Maternity [Home], so that's right in the heart of town.

JR: Where did your family live?

AF: We lived in---gee, at that time I don't know. My recollection of growing up was in the Cunha Lane where Foster [Botanic] Gardens is now, the extension to River Street in that area. Anyway, that's where I grew up when I was going to elementary school.

JR: And what did your folks do for a living?

AF: My father [Ong Lum] worked in a dry goods store, a Chinese dry goods store. When he came from China, I understand, he used to be a salesman to go to the neighbor islands. I don't know what he was selling, some kind of dry goods I think. My mother [Mary Akahiakuleana Lum] was a housewife in the beginning, then later on, as we grew older and were able to take care of ourselves, she worked for the playground, like a supervisor. And then, later on, she went back to normal, teacher-training school [Territorial Normal and Training School] to become a teacher. She finished in 1924. And at that time they didn't have to go to the neighbor islands [after graduating to find a teaching position], so she taught at 'Aiea School, that was her first school. And I was in about the eighth grade or a freshman in high school at that time. And by that time, too, she and my father had separated, they had divorced. Neither one got married again until much later—I mean, she did.

JR: Do you know what prompted her to want to go back to school and become a teacher?

AF: I think she was always---she was an ambitious sort of person, and she wanted to improve herself, so she never gave up that. She got married as a young girl, and she hadn't finished school. And I don't know whether it was her friends or what that prompted her to go back to school.

JR: Where was your mother born? Do you know?

AF: My mother was born in Lahaina, Maui, of an old Hawaiian family.

JR: And your father, when did he come from China?

AF: He came as a young boy, but I don't know what year. He was much older than my mother. I think he must have been, maybe, twice her age. And he never went back to China all the time he was working here, until—let's see, I was in high school when he decided to go back to China. You know, the Chinese people always wanted to go back to the homeland to die. And I think he wasn't well at that time, so he went back to China and he died there.

JR: So you never saw him again?

AF: So I never saw him again after he left here. But I used to see him occasionally when I was in high school.

JR: Do you remember what year your mother retired as a teacher?

AF: Gee, no. I don't remember. In the fifties, I think, 1950s.

JR: You mentioned going to school. What school did you go to as a youngster?

AF: I went to Central Grammar. It was, at that time, first to eighth grade, and they called it Central Grammar School. And after I finished Central Grammar I went to McKinley High School for four years and after that to the University of Hawai'i [UH].

JR: What do you remember about Central Grammar School? Was it a big school?

AF: Yes, it was a big school. And it was a really cosmopolitan school. I think that was the grammar school that many of the Caucasian kids came to, so I had many Caucasian classmates. And then we had all the other ethnic groups. I remember my first-grade teacher, Miss Armstrong. I remember her teaching us the alphabet. Before that, I remember going to kindergarten school. What I remember in kindergarten was cooking rice—nice, soft, boiled rice. That's the only thing I remember of kindergarten.

But in first grade I remember learning the alphabet. Then I remember my second-grade teacher, she was. . . . See, now I've forgotten her name. But I can still remember her face. And then third grade was who now? Mrs. [Olympia] Bowman. Fourth grade was Mrs. [Ethel] Coulter. I had all Caucasian teachers at that time. I don't think there were---there was not an Oriental teacher in the school, nor Hawaiian, except Mrs. Mollie Yap, who taught at—I think she taught at Royal School. Mrs. Mollie Yap was Hawaiian-Chinese-Caucasian, and she was one of the early leading educators among the local people. But each one of my grammar

school teachers was a Caucasian woman originally from someplace else. Mrs. Coulter, fourth grade; fifth grade, Miss Lightfoot. Sixth grade we had the departmentalized program. We went to six different teachers, one for geography, one for arithmetic, one for English, one for reading.

JR: Sort of like high school.

AF: Mm hm, or junior high school. I think that was the beginning of the departmentalized junior high school. And still we were from one to eighth grade. And seventh and eighth grade, also the same kind of program.

JR: Then you went to McKinley.

AF: Mm hm. Oh, and at Central Grammar, I forget whether it was once a week or once a month—maybe once a month—we'd have a flag ceremony out in the open. And I remember my music teacher in the fifth grade, Mrs. Bowen, she would lead the singing of the whole assembly. And she was the one who taught us a Hawaiian song. And at that time, there was a music supervisor, Sally Criss—she was part Hawaiian—she would come around occasionally to see that we were singing the Hawaiian songs properly. And that was my first introduction to singing Hawaiian songs.

I remember---oh, in fifth grade I think it was, there was the home of Princess Ruth [Ke'elikōlani], who was one of the wealthiest among the Hawaiian royalty, and she had this beautiful home that they used as a school. I think by that time she had died. And I remember the room that I was in [in] fifth grade had a high ceiling, and there was a seal on the top of the ceiling. And that seal, or one of those seals, is now at the little museum right next to the chapel of the Kamehameha School, the newest chapel that they have there. They have a home built with all of Bernice Pauahi [Bishop's] things—furniture—and I don't know whether they got the seal because Mrs. Bishop was one of her [i.e., Princess Ruth's] beneficiaries from her large estate. So they have her seal up on that ceiling. It was a beautiful building, and it's too bad that there was no historic preservation society to keep that building. Our eighth-grade graduation picture was taken on the steps of that building, and then shortly after—I don't know what year it was, but I think when I was at McKinley—they demolished that building and they put up an ugly old straight concrete building which is still there. But it's such a shame they lost such a beautiful building. Of course, it might have been termite-eaten, too.

JR: So the fifth grade used that building . . .

AF: Fifth grade. And they had some other classes, too, there. See, each of the rooms---the rooms were so large, enough to house a class of students. So I was in the fifth grade when I was in that building. I don't know what other grades were there. And once a week, on Fridays I think it was, during the long lunch recess we'd have, on the lanai [*lānai*] one of the girls would play the piano, and then there would be like a social time. I remember that.

JR: Do you remember what a typical day was like for you when you were in grammar school?

AF: Well, I was living in Cunha Lane, walked to school—and it must have taken about maybe ten or fifteen minutes—walked all the way to school. There was not that much traffic in those

days. Nobody had cars to get to school. And I remember recesses jumping rope or playing marbles and hopscotch with my girlfriends.

JR: You mentioned that there were a lot of *Haole* kids at the school. Did the kids intermix and play with one another?

AF: Mm hm. I remember there was a pretty girl. She was from the Trout family. She had lovely golden curls. She was so pretty. Yeah, we used to play together with each other. And then we had another pair of twins, the Dougherty twins. I think when I was in the fifth grade we had a large number of sets of twins. They even took a picture of all of them. Japanese twins, *Haole* twins, Hawaiian twins, and they had a picture of them. And it must have been in some magazine. The Holt twins, the Mirikitani twins, the Dougherty twins, those are the three sets that I remember.

JR: And what would you do after school, when school was *pau?*

AF: Well, walk home. And I think by that time, in the later grades, like around the fourth grade and fifth grade, my mother was working at the playground as one of the playground supervisors. They used to have playground supervisors. I never joined her—no, I used to go to one of the parks where she was and then play there with some other friends that I made. Otherwise, you know, where we lived there was a lane. I had a younger brother, and I had Japanese girlfriends across the street from our house in this lane. And we used to play marbles, we used to play *peewee*, which they don't play nowadays.

JR: What is *peewee*?

AF: You don't know what *peewee* is?

JR: No, I don't know.

AF: Using two sticks, and then there's certain kinds of things you had to do. We used to play hide and seek. And then with my Japanese girlfriends we used to play house and cut up flowers and leaves for food. That was fun.

And in that area, every yard had mango trees. I think the owner of the place, Cunha—C-U-N-H-A—he must have owned that whole piece of property, and he must have planted different kinds of mango trees. Every yard had a different kind of mango tree. So I grew up climbing mango trees during mango season, eating all kinds of mangos. And then there was a—in one of the neighbor's yards there was a huge plum tree. I think they call it the java plum. And during the season, my mother used to have my brother collect the fruit, and she'd make plum jelly. It was so good. I've never seen that kind of tree since that time.

And oh, there was a Hawaiian neighbor in one of the houses, and it seems like several times during the year they would have a luau [*lū'au*]. So I remember hearing squealing pigs early in the morning when they were slaughtering it. And I used to watch some of it, where they'd clean it up and then they'd build an *imu*. That was my first exposure (in) seeing a pig being cooked underground in the *imu*. And, of course, the neighbors were not invited, but we used to just rubberneck. And I think they had no more than thirty people attending the party—the

luau—and invariably it ended up with somebody fighting at the party. I think it was caused by too much alcohol, whatever they drank in those days. I don't know whether it was *'ōkolehao* or whatever, but it always ended up in a fight. It was kind of exciting, and yet it didn't get too violent.

(Laughter)

AF: There would be the music. We'd see them—watch them—doing the hula with each other. No paid entertainers, it's just the ones who came to the party provided their own entertainment.

And my girlfriend, my Japanese girlfriend across the street, her father had a little combination drug/candy store some distance away. And she used to take his—I don't know whether it was his lunch or some kind of meal—and I'd accompany her. And I used to drool over the candy in the little jars, but we never got a taste of the candy, not even one piece. But I'd go with her to the father's store and come back.

JR: You didn't get a little allowance that you could have used to . . .

AF: No, we never had allowances in those days. Everything was provided for us. We didn't even need—well, I remember buying lunch in school occasionally. And lunch was only five cents, and I'd have money for lunch. Otherwise, we'd have just plain bread-and-butter sandwich or bread-and-jelly sandwich for lunch.

JR: From home?

AF: From home, mm hmm. No peanut butter in those days. No snacks.

JR: So just bread and jelly?

AF: Just bread and jelly or bread and deviled ham. But I remember the occasions when we did have a nickel or so to buy lunch. There was a corner store near the school that sold *chow fun*, two packages—two little packages—for five cents. And oh, I remember they had more bean sprouts than anything else, but it was so good you'd practically eat the package, too.

JR: The school didn't---they didn't have the lunch for the students?

AF: They had lunch, but sometimes—I mean, even like today, kids prefer to go to the store to buy something different. Of course, when we worked in the cafeteria—at that time we worked in the cafeteria, too, once a month maybe. And we used to like that because we had free lunch then. We could eat whatever they served.

JR: Do you remember what they used to serve?

AF: I don't remember.

JR: Do you remember whether the students liked it or not?

AF: We ate it. There was no choice. Many of them brought their own sandwiches from home, so

we'd sit together and eat. And so I don't think the cafeteria served that many lunches, like they do today, where everybody buys the school lunch. Very few children come, I think, today with home lunches.

JR: Then you moved on to McKinley.

AF: To McKinley, and stayed there for four years.

JR: How did McKinley compare to experiences at the grammar school?

AF: That's where we made, I think, more friends, and then we were going out socially. There were a lot of places for dances, and my mother would allow me to go to these dances. And it was a lot of fun. We'd go in a group, whole group of us. And a lot of the high school boys went to these dances, too. Or we went to Hi-Y socials. We belonged to the Girl Reserves, and there was the boys' Hi-Y group, so we'd go to those. There were picnics.

JR: These are things that the school sponsored or just amongst your friends?

AF: Among the friends and among the clubs. Oh, I know, going back to Central Grammar, in the sixth grade we had a small group of friends. We used to go hiking up to Tantalus and then we'd also go to just below the lighthouse on Diamond Head. I don't know how we got there, I guess by streetcar. And we'd have a weenie roast, just late afternoon, early evening, no later than five or six o'clock, I think. Have a weenie roast and a marshmallow roast and then come home by ourselves. And that was it. I remember in grammar school doing that.

JR: Sounds like fun.

AF: Mm hm. That's when the weenies tasted so good. And there was a---on King Street there was the Metropolitan Meat Market. That was the big meat market where people would get their specialties, and that's where they had nice, fat sausages. That's what we used to get for the weenie roast.

Of course, they had the---I remember my father going to the old fish market on Kekaulike Street, Kekaulike and King Street. And that's when you could buy vegetables. We always had stew on Sunday. Vegetables were five cents for an assortment of whatever you put in stew—celery, tomato, potato, onion. And I remember having stew every Sunday, and it used to be so good.

We'd walk to church. I used to go to Kaumakapili Church. And that's quite a distance from where we lived, but you never thought about it at that time. We just walked to Sunday school early in the morning, walk home, and then in the afternoon we'd go to—there was what is called Kauluwela Mission just around where the Salvation Army people have their building now, and there's some housing there on Vineyard Street. There was a Kauluwela Lane where a lot of the old Chinese families and part-Hawaiian families lived. And so we'd walk. I had a girlfriend from grammar school, she lived in Kauluwela Lane. She came from (the) big Yap family. Well anyway, she and I were good friends. We used to go to Kauluwela Mission in the afternoon, and it was an extension of Sunday school. And that was kind of fun. Easter and Christmas and Mother's Day they'd have little exercises, and we were always given little

verses to memorize and recite, so that was kind of an exciting time. And I remember at Christmastime they always had little boxes of candy that they passed out to us, just a small amount of candy. And that was great, too.

JR: You finally got some candy.

AF: Yeah, mm hm. Yeah, once in a while I guess I had a spare nickel. They had these wax candies, look like a long candle. And you chewed it just like gum. But around this long cylinder they had a ring, and that ring was just like a million-dollar ring to us. It had a little imitation stone, tiny, little stone. Oh, that used to be the biggest treat. You know, it's good fun to think of little things bringing you so much joy.

JR: Yeah, something that you wouldn't think now . . .

AF: Yeah, mm hm. And even at that time it meant so much. And yet, we didn't waste it, we didn't throw it around, and we didn't keep on accumulating. We didn't go out and keep on accumulating. Just one, maybe, in the whole year, that was sufficient for us.

JR: Looking back, do you think that your family, in terms of its income level, was average for that area?

AF: Yeah, I think so. Because we had a—I remember—two-bedroom home. And my mother started me on piano lessons. I don't know whether---I think when she was working at the playground she had some of her own money, so she started me on piano lessons. And we had a piano. And we had a nice yard. My father used to do the yard work, and I would help him, again, on Sundays. I remember doing it on Sundays. I think that's where my love for growing things started. I used to have a little garden. I planted cosmos, which I liked, and we had some roses in the yard. And I still like working with plants.

JR: We were talking earlier about McKinley. What subjects appealed to you back then? Did any?

AF: Yeah. Let's see now. I had good English teachers, and they made English fun. And I guess I did well. One of them, especially, seemed very fond of me, so even after we left McKinley she kept in touch with some of us.

I remember some of my French teachers. I took French for three years. And it was just a textbook kind of French. I don't think any of them were French speaking, so maybe they were a chapter or so ahead of us. But my third-year French teacher was a male teacher, Mr. Victor Ligda. He was also the coach of the swimming team. And some of the fellows in the class claimed that he was partial to girls because he always gave us the high grades. (Laughs) But that was just reciting what he wanted us to recite, so it wasn't difficult at all.

Then I remember in geometry class—oh, my algebra teacher. I remember being exposed to algebra for the first time. She was an excellent teacher, Mrs. [Grace] Coale. She was so patient and she explained things so clearly. I enjoyed that class very much. Later on when I took geometry, that got kind of fuzzy. But one of the classmates, an upperclassmate in the class, would help me with some of my lessons. I remember that.

And my senior English teacher was a very strict teacher. And later on, in later years—long after she retired and while I was teaching—she'd come here. Some of her classes would invite her to their reunions. And she mentioned one time that she worked hard to see that we passed the exam to get into the University of Hawai'i, because—I don't understand what the reasons were, but evidently it must have been difficult for the so-called local kids to get in. They weren't accepting them. And so you had to do pretty well to pass the examination. So she worked hard to give us all the background, and she always was so pleased when she found out that certain ones had been accepted.

JR: Were the teachers at McKinley still mostly *Haole?*

AF: Yes, every one of them. Every one of mine was *Haole*. And at that time Miles E. Cary was the principal, and he was—everybody remembers him well. He was such a nice person, and he treated everybody so well. He really had a good memory for names. He remembered students and their names. And he was there for a long time, Miles E. Cary.

JR: You still read his name in—I've come across his name.

AF: Yes, mm hm.

JR: Why do you think he is so well remembered?

AF: I think he stood up for the local kids. And I don't know whether his program at McKinley was such that people remembered him for it. And I think he was community minded, too. He got involved within the community. And he followed his students' progress. He kept in touch with them. That class of 1924 with all the businessmen—Chinn Ho and that group—they were under him, too, at that time. And yet McKinley was named for President McKinley, I guess, but I don't remember any celebration for McKinley.

Oh, I know, another favorite class of mine was orchestra. Mr. [Walter] Maygrove started the school orchestra. And I played the cello. I learned to play the cello under him. And because I had had piano—I could read notes—it made it easier. And then he invited me to come to band classes. I don't know how I was able to get into band classes. I must have had a free period. So I joined the band class, and I took up the trombone. But I never did actually play in the band, I just learned how to play the trombone after a fashion. But I guess I was one of his favorites, too. He was a nice man. I think he really started the band and orchestra music in all the schools.

JR: So that was a formal orchestra with strings and woodwinds?

AF: Yes. And we used to play for—at that time they used to have oratorical contests among the high schools, and we'd play for the program in the beginning or in between. A full symphony orchestra. And his band was a marching band. And then he also started a fife and drum corps, so I took up the fife, too. And that was an extracurricular activity—after-school kind of thing—never got very good at it. But we were exposed to that, too. He was an excellent musician. And it was, I think, a couple of years after I left high school that he succumbed to cancer. He lived here all the time, he and his wife, and he had two children.

And do you know that about five years ago I met one of his daughters. She came here, and she was looking for people who were in his class. She didn't know too much about her father. See, he died when she was a little girl, and then the mother took them back to the Mainland, lived up there. And I think maybe the mother got married again. But anyway, she was always interested in what her father did. So she found me through talking to somebody else that knew that I was in the orchestra, and she contacted me. And we became quite friendly. And she moved here. She was working in Safeway on the Mainland, and she came down here. I guess by that time she retired and she was able to move. She had two daughters who were working, but she left them. She said no, she wanted to come to Hawai'i, she loved it here. So now both of her daughters are living here. So I don't get to see her because she babysits. She has either one or two grandchildren now, so we don't get together. But that was my continuing association with Mr. Maygrove.

JR: You played piano, cello, and you tried trombone and fife. Which of those instruments did you enjoy playing the most?

AF: Well, I was more comfortable with the piano because I could also play by ear. And we had a little orchestra in high school. One of the band boys who was a good trumpet player formed a little dance orchestra, so I used to play the piano for them.

JR: And you played by ear?

AF: Some of it I played by ear or some from music.

JR: What kind of music do you think this kind of dance orchestra would have played?

AF: "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" and stuff like that. (Chuckles)

JR: You studied really hard to get into the university.

AF: Yeah, I guess I was a pretty—I mean, I always did my homework. And I don't remember working that hard.

JR: Did you know that you wanted to be a teacher?

AF: Well, there was nothing else to do unless you went into the commercial field, and I never thought about that. Today I have friends who didn't get into the university. They took up commercial subjects. That is one of my regrets, I never took typing. I wish I had taken typing in school, in high school. I think everybody should take typing. That would have been an asset to me in later years, but I never took typing. So some of my present friends went into secretarial work, for instance. And a lot of them went to normal school. I don't know whether they—well, one reason they didn't go to the university, I think, is they couldn't afford to go. My mother was teaching at that time, so she was able to pay the tuition for me to go to the university. But some of my good friends today, they went through the normal school.

JR: Was that less expensive?

AF: I don't think they had to pay anything. It was like public school. And then they needed to go,

at that time, only two years of normal school training and they went out to teach. So they have been teaching say, at least, two or three years beyond me—earlier than I did—because we had to go for four years, and by that time we had to go for our fifth-year certificate. So actually we had five years of college before we were ready to be sent out to teach.

JR: What did you gain by going to the university that someone that went to the normal school—was it just a broader education, do you think?

AF: I suppose. And at the university you had a chance to take subjects where you could teach in the secondary school. At normal school, the secondary education that they could get allowed them to teach in like junior high, the upper grammar grades, seventh and eight grade. But at the university we could teach in high school at that time. But they didn't have any music major at that time, so I couldn't major in music. But when I went out to teach I did more of music teaching than anything else.

JR: Would you have majored in music?

AF: I don't know.

JR: What would you have done with your music degree, do you think?

AF: Well, I guess just teach music. But I mean, I would have had a more solid background to teach music if they had had music classes—music theory classes, for instance.

JR: When you got to the university were there many of your friends from McKinley that also were going there?

AF: I made new friends. There were students from the neighbor islands. And at that time, I guess I felt more Hawaiian than Chinese. I didn't join the Chinese students, but I joined the Hawaiian sorority, so I had a lot of part-Hawaiian friends, especially from the neighbor islands. In fact, one of my very good friends, I met her through this sorority. It wasn't a sorority like the ones they have on the Mainland. We just joined. We didn't have to go through any initiation (chuckles) in this particular Hawaiian one. And we had a nice time together. We used to go on picnics, we used to have fundraisers. At that time, and all the time I was there, Mrs. Kahananui, who was teaching at the university, she was our advisor, Dorothy Kahananui. She was in the music department at that time. That's right, I took one music course from her, elementary school music. (She was my first local teacher.)

Mr. [Benjamin] Wist, Dean Wist, was head of the school of education at that time, too. And they had prescribed courses for us to take, all of us in education. That's right, we majored in education. Instead of like science or something else, education was our course. And then from there they channeled you into elementary or secondary. I have such a hazy recollection of some of the things that we took. But anyway, some of the things were geared for elementary, some of the courses were geared for secondary.

JR: Were most of your peers women?

AF: A mixture. I guess in the school of education there were more women than men. Now that I

think back, there were more women than male students. But in the general classes, like in the literature class, it was a mixture. In the social science classes it was a large, mixed group.

JR: I wanted to ask you one more thing about the sorority. What kinds of things . . .

AF: Did we do?

JR: You mentioned fundraisers. What would you do for a fundraiser?

AF: Oh, I remember one time we had like a rummage sale and lei sale, making flower leis and selling them. And we raised small amounts of money. I don't even remember what we used it for. (Chuckles) And one of the members, her family had a home—now it's called Ka'a'awa, Punalu'u or Ka'a'awa, and we spent a weekend there. Irmgard Aluli was in a class below me, and she belonged to the same sorority. And at that time she played mostly by ear. And she could play the guitar, she could play the piano. And we used to have a nice time just singing together. And I remember there was one program we had to do the hula. I forget who taught us. It was about the rainbow, "Ke Ānuenue." Ke Ānuenue was the name of our Hawaiian club. And we learned a dance about the rainbow. And I forget for what occasion it was.

JR: How did the university, at that time, seem to you? Did it seem to be a big, sprawling place or a small . . .

AF: No, it was contained. Now when I think back, I think, oh, it was so easy. We could walk from class to class without any trouble. I lived up 'Ālewa Heights at that time, and across the street from us—the neighbor—he was a class above me. And he had a little Ford car, so I'd ride with him to school in the morning. And in the afternoon I'd catch the—we called it the streetcar at that time—catch the streetcar, get off at Judd Street, and walk all the way up the heights to home.

JR: How did it compare to your experience at McKinley in terms of . . .

AF: Well, at McKinley I had—I enjoyed McKinley. There was more social activity for me at McKinley. As I said, we used to go out to these dances, and we had a lot of fun. At the university, I don't know whether it was because of the studies, I didn't go out socially that much.

JR: Compared to McKinley, did the university seem to be a much larger place?

AF: I never thought about it that way. And some of my friends---now I look back, I always did my studying alone. I never had a group of people to study with. And yet, now I realize, some of my friends, like especially for the science classes, they got together in groups, and they really studied. And so they were able to help each other. I had to do it all on my own, and so I didn't do very well in the science classes. And I think if I had a group to go with—the Hawaiian club, we never got together to study. (Chuckles) I guess it was more a social group.

JR: Yeah, that's part of it. I think I'm just going to stop for a second and turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

AF: Okay, one of the things I remember about high school was only the very well-to-do people could afford to send their children to Punahou [School]. One of my friends was the first Japanese girl I know who had a perm, and she was a Punahou student. She was an excellent pianist, too. She had an older sister who was a pianist, a really professional pianist. Polly Yamamoto was her name, and she's still alive today. She's Mrs. Furuya today. What else can I tell you?

JR: Did the private school kids have a certain reputation? I mean, how did the public school kids think of the private school kids?

AF: Well, I don't think we got together. But I remember going up to Punahou School to see *Taming of the Shrew*, and Peggy Hockley, I remember her as—I think she took the part of the jester. And I don't know who recommended the play to us. I don't know whether it was recommended by our English teachers to attend the play up at Punahou. So I remember seeing that play. Otherwise, we never associated with the Punahou School kids. Polly was the only one, because she'd come to the dances that we went to.

JR: Do you remember whether McKinley had anything like a carnival or anything like that?

AF: Not at that time. We didn't have any carnivals at that time. But I remember they were working on the swimming pool—they didn't have a swimming pool—and to help with the financing of it. . . . I wasn't a part of it, but I know that they were carrying rocks from—I don't know whether it was Punchbowl—this is a hazy thing to me—to build up the sides of the swimming pool. That sounds crazy. But I never---I mean, the swimming pool wasn't finished when I was in high school so I never got that.

JR: Was there like a gym, or was there . . .

AF: We had to take physical education—we called it PE—but that was one of my weak points. I wasn't very physically active. I don't know how we got by. But there were friends of mine who were good basketball players or volleyball players. The only game I used to like to play at home in our lane was baseball. That I enjoyed. And I could hit the ball.

(Laughter)

JR: Did the school have a team, and you'd go to the games?

AF: Oh, yes, yes. We had a football team, we had a basketball team. But the four years I was in McKinley we took the cellarship.

JR: Oh. (Laughs)

AF: We were at the bottom of the totem pole. But we had a pretty good basketball team. When I was a junior I started dating one of the basketball players, and he became my husband later

on. ROTC [Reserved Officer Training Corps] was a big thing during high school. And the boys would elect a sponsor to represent their battalion. And I remember I was a sponsor for three years, and each year it was for a different group, when I was a sophomore, a junior, and a senior. And not that I was going with any of the boys. But I know in my senior year, I know the captain of the band said, "You were Mr. Maygrove's favorite, so that's why you became the band sponsor."

(Laughter)

AF: But it was fun, because we had our uniform. We felt very special, because when the boys had to march in like the Armistice Day Parade, we used to march with them. And then when they had a field day, we'd be there to represent the whole ROTC unit. Every boy, I think, was a part of the ROTC unit at that time. It was not an elective. They had to take it.

JR: And as a sponsor, you had a uniform and . . .

AF: We had a uniform. We didn't have to drill with them.

JR: Did you carry a flag or something?

AF: No, we didn't have to drill with them. It was just an honorary kind of position.

JR: Do you remember whether there were senior proms and junior proms and things like that?

AF: Yes, mm hm. We went to those and had lots of fun. The big hall for one of the proms was at what they called Waikīkī Park. And it's where, I think, around [across] where the [Hilton] Hawaiian Village is now. There was a big space there. There was a big dance hall. And I never was on any of the committees to make the arrangements, but we used to have it there. And we had little cards where you signed up for dances. Then there was Young Hotel Roof Garden, where—one of my classmates says that's where we had our senior banquet. And he remembers giving me a lei. I don't remember that part. But anyway, we had our senior banquet followed by a dance. So we had those.

JR: And the commencement, what was the commencement like?

AF: Well our class, my class—the class of '28—by that time the McKinley High School auditorium had been built, and so we were the first class to graduate in McKinley High School auditorium. So it was quite special. I remember one of my mother's first cousins, she was always good to us, and she gave me some money to buy a graduation dress. So that's how I got my graduation dress, with the money that she gave. And in those days they didn't give so many leis, but they had little bouquets of flowers—pretty little bouquets—and friends and relatives would give us these little bouquets for graduation.

JR: And—I'm just thinking back on when I went to high school—were there annuals, and people would sign their friends' annuals and things like that?

AF: Mm hm, yes. And then we had our senior-class pictures, and then some little saying for each person. I remember the editor of our annual, Walter Lee—he's since passed away—he was a

good friend. I mean, we used to go around in the same group. But I never belonged to any of the annual staff or the newspaper staff. They had the newspaper, too, at that time, the *Pinion,* but it wasn't a daily at that time.

JR: What was the name of it?

AF: They still have it called the *Pinion* . . .

JR: Oh, okay.

AF: . . . but now it's a daily. Mm hm. We used to have assemblies out in the open. That was before we had the auditorium. The auditorium wasn't ready for our assemblies. But we had it out in the open. And I still remember an upperclassman who was two classes above, Jack Wakayama, I think he was student body president. He was such a humorous person. He always had some kind of joke, and even to today—he's still alive—he has a good sense of humor.

JR: What would they have an assembly for? I don't know if you remember. Would they have one if there was some entertainment, or would the principal have to give a speech, or . . .

AF: That part is hazy. I don't remember. I think the various clubs, when they wanted to promote anything—like the Hi-Y people—would have one. And they had another club called the McKinley Citizenship Club, MCC, and it was an honor to be chosen for the Girls Auxiliary or for the boys to be invited into the MCC. Then there was a National Honor Society and the Hi-Ys, the Girl Reserves. And we had another organization made up of all the girls. They called it the Girls League. That was a pretty important organization. I remember the president of that league—when I was a senior, I think she was the president—she was a Korean girl, Anita Hahn. She was one of those that went on to normal [school] and became a teacher from normal. But she could have made it to the university. She was a smart girl. But I don't know whether it was finances that caused her to go to normal school or whether she wanted to get out to teach early.

JR: I don't know how to ask this question so that you understand what I'm getting at, but I know that when I was in high school we'd have these assemblies and things, kids would be giggling and cutting up, and sometimes in class there would be the same atmosphere. How do you remember the classes? Were the kids well behaved, generally, or was it pretty much like today, where there are some cutups and there's some . . .

AF: We never cut up. In those days, I think, we all respected the teachers. And even if a teacher we felt was too strict or too stern, I don't remember anybody answering back or cutting up in class. We were really serious about our studies. I remember the one time playing hooky from school. (Laughs) A group of us—I don't know how it started—we decided we'd go to Waikīkī, to Public Baths. And I don't know how we had our swimsuit, but we cut class and went to Waikīkī to swim, had a good time, and never thought [too much about it]. And nobody caught up with us. That was the only time, only once in my whole high school that I remember cutting class. And we didn't feel guilty about it because nobody—I mean, we didn't have to serve detention or anything. They just chalked it up to your absence, that's all. We didn't have to bring a note to [explain] why you were absent. Well, I remember I went to

school very regularly. I never stayed home. I don't remember being sick from high school, staying home for any reason at all. I went regularly.

JR: Another time kids cut up was when there was a substitute teacher.

AF: Well, our teachers were strong. I don't remember ever having a substitute.

(Laughter)

JR: Oh, boy. Well, let's leapfrog to the university now. Something we had just talked about at McKinley was the sports. Did the UH field a team, and do you ever remember going to games or anything like that?

AF: Yes, we always supported the team. We'd go to all the games and yell our heads off and get hoarse. We were never cheerleaders or song leaders but we were there in the audience to support the team. We learned all the cheers, all the yells, all the songs.

JR: Is this football or baseball?

AF: All the games. All the games. Baseball, even though that was slow. We went to baseball games. Basketball games were exciting. We knew a little bit more about basketball than football. But even though we didn't understand all the football, we just cheered when we were supposed to cheer. And when it rained, I remember sitting in the rain, getting drenched, and still yelling for the team whether they were winning or losing. We were just there in spirit.

JR: Do you remember if there was a field on campus that they had these games at, or was there a . . .

AF: At McKinley they had baseball games on the field, but basketball we used to go to, I think, the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] building. There was a YMCA building in town where—the Merchant Street building, Merchandise Building. They had a hall there where they used to play basketball. At the university their games were at the old, small stadium on King Street. All of the games were there, so it was easy to go from the university down to the stadium. I didn't follow the basketball games or baseball games at the university. It was only football that I followed. I don't know why.

JR: Did you used to get dressed up for school? Kids now wear shorts and slippers, anything goes.

AF: I know. Some of it is real weird, and so are the teachers, too.

(Laughter)

JR: What about when you were . . .

AF: No, we were very conservative. But you know, I remember one picture, the dresses went down to the ankle. And I remember one of my mother's dresses fitting me, and I used her dress. Most of us, I think, many of us, sewed our own dresses. I used to sew my own school dresses. And for PE we'd have the big black bloomers and the white sailor tops. But for the

sponsor---let's see now, did I sew my own? No, I think at that time, I think dressmakers were not too expensive in those days. So because we had to have all the same type of uniform—and it was always the gold-colored material, rayon or something like that, with black bands—each of us had ours made. But we didn't dress up fancily, I don't remember. Clothes weren't the most important thing in our lives.

JR: But by the same token, you didn't wear shorts and slippers?

AF: At that time, no. We always had shoes and socks or shoes and stockings.

JR: Did the women used to wear slacks back then or did they always wear dresses?

AF: No, no slacks, all dresses.

(Laughter)

AF: Yeah, I guess it's really different from your age group.

JR: Yeah, that's why it's nice to get some idea of how things were back then.

AF: And then I don't remember chewing gum at that time, you know, like how the kids started chewing gum. Of course, maybe the kids I associated with, we were more the serious type. We weren't goofing off. So we didn't do anything to break rules. We did what we were supposed to do. I think we were pretty—brag, brag, brag—model kids.

(Laughter)

JR: Well that's what---from talking to people, it sounds like the students back fifty, sixty years ago were different than the students I went to school with. It just sounds like it was a different environment.

AF: Well, education was the thing. Of course, my mother never stressed it on me. By that time I was more under the influence of my mother than my father. They didn't expect you to do well in school. When we brought home our report cards, if we did well, that was it. And I don't remember failing anything in high school. As I said, I didn't have to study that hard, and yet everything didn't seem—I didn't fail anything, which was fortunate for me. I wasn't brilliant.

JR: So when you were at the university, how did they teach you to be a teacher? Do you remember if you had to get up in front of a practice . . .

AF: Oh, later on, yes, after we had had the general courses. Like we had a course in literature for children, what kinds of books or reading material for children; geography, in the geography class—I had an excellent geography teacher, Miss [Lorna] Jarrett—how to present a subject. We'd choose our own title and prepare for it and then present it to the class, do all the research for it. That I remember. But in the general courses at the university, we never had any methods course. It was later on, when we finished all of the general courses, then we had to do our practice teaching. And there we were under a supervisor. Like I had—if I remember

correctly—a few weeks in the first grade. And I remember my supervisor then, Miss [Florence] Avison, she was thorough. And we had to write plans—we had to learn how to write plans and organize the day's program. You had to have everything organized, what you're going to start off with, and what you're going to have for every hour of the day until you finished. And that was one of the best trainings I got, I think, being under Miss Avison in the first grade.

And then I went to the fifth grade, and I had a Miss [Mary] Engle, who finally became a principal, and later on she was one of my mother's principals. I had the fifth grade with her. And there again, the unit was a little bit different from what you taught in the first grade. And after we finished that year, the following year we went on probationary teaching, and that's when I was sent to Kalākaua Intermediate School. It was the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade.

JR: Where was the practice teaching done? Where did you get these first graders and . . .

AF: That was held at the old [Territorial] Normal [and] Training School. They had the regular elementary classes there, and we had the regular classes.

JR: So it was like a lab school?

AF: Yes, that's right. Later on when we did our probationary teaching I was sent to Kalākaua Intermediate School. I don't know how I got there, but anyway I went there. And I had a seventh-grade and an eighth-grade class. And there was a Mrs. [Ivah] (Feiteira). She married a Portuguese fellow [Thomas Feiteira] who taught at McKinley. She was my immediate supervisor. She was very thorough, too. She'd come in and supervise, and then she'd look over your plans. And I had a seventh-grade and eighth-grade English/social studies class, and that's where I taught a whole semester. And I told you [in a previous conversation] we earned $44.88 a month.

By that time, let's see---I think I was married by that time. See, I continued my education after I got married. I got married when I was at the end of my sophomore year at the university. And so junior and senior years I had more of the normal school training. So yeah, I taught at Kalākaua Intermediate. And then we went back for our fifth year, where we had, again, general courses. That's where I had a statistics course and then a course from a Mr.—what was his name—[George] Gordon. I forget what he taught. And then there was a Mr. [Willis] Coale, the husband of my algebra teacher. But his wife was far superior to him—well, because of the subject, too. He was very nice, but he lectured to us. That's where we had our lecture courses, nothing hands-on kind of thing.

JR: So you just took notes and listened.

AF: Yeah, yeah. That was a hard year for me because I lost my—I had my first baby, and then when she was two I lost her. She just died overnight. When they performed an autopsy they found that one of her lymph glands had just enlarged and suffocated her. So at that time that was a big loss to me. And then I continued on. And then I had my second child, Robin. She's my only daughter now. So I stayed out of school, and then I went back for my fifth year. And it was after my fifth year that I got my certificate to go and teach.

JR: When you first got up in front of a classroom, how did it feel, when you got up as a teacher?

AF: Well, because we had had the practice teaching and because we had had the probationary teaching, I felt very comfortable, even though—I told you I got my first job because of my experience with the orchestra and band.

JR: Where was that?

AF: This was my first teaching job, at Waimea High School (on Kaua'i). I met a former classmate of mine who had been teaching at Waimea High School, and when she saw me, summertime, she said, "Amy, you got a job?"

"No."

"I got a job for you. Teach my band class up in Waimea High School."

And I said, "I can't teach band. I don't have a background for band."

She said, "Yes, you can read music, you can teach band."

She had started the band class at Waimea High School, and so she convinced me to take over the class because she wanted to get to town. And she couldn't leave that position unless she got a replacement for her. And (because) I needed a job, I said, "Okay, I'll take it." And they accepted me, without—in those days they took the teachers wherever they could get them, whether you had the major in that particular subject or not. So I had a band class, and I had a chorus class, and then I had what they called a core studies class, that's English and social studies. So the English and social studies class was no problem because I had had training for that. The chorus class—well, I really had no training for it except that I could play the piano, I could read music. And we had a songbook. We just let them choose the songs and they sang the songs. Of course, I never had to put on any programs with them.

Then the band class—at least I could keep time. And the kids were so good. There were some boys who were excellent musicians in that class. And they told me afterwards, yeah, once in a while they'd play off on their own, but I would never catch on. So they had a good time, and I had a good time, and we got along fine.

(Laughter)

AF: And we used to play for the football games. And we had a band uniform. And today some of those kids are good friends of mine. (Chuckles) We played for the county fair, and we got first place because I think I was the only female band leader. (Chuckles) Oh, it was fun.

JR: Did you find it hard to go from, say, teaching an English class and then teaching a band class and doing those kind of—all within the same day?

AF: Not really, because we didn't have any supervisor to check on us. And the principal---Mr. McLaren was my first principal. He was really an idealist, I think. He had high objectives. And if we had any questions, we'd go and talk to him, and he'd give us all his reasons. And

we'd never get anything resolved, so we'd do it the way we wanted to. But he was a nice—he was a gentleman. I have great respect for him, Dallas McLaren. He's ninety-eight now. And someone was just saying that, oh, he's getting old. I said, "Look, I find a lot of people much younger than he who are not as sharp as he is." This person was complaining because he was asked to speak at a meeting of the internees that were getting money, the Japanese relocation camp, because he was there during the war. He was principal of the school there [at Poston War Relocation Center in Poston, Arizona], so they asked him to give a speech. Well, he is long winded to begin with, and if you don't keep him to a subject, he'll wander off all over the place. And so she was complaining about that. And I said, "You know, he had a marvelous memory. In school, he'd see any student on the campus"—and it was an elementary through high school kind of school.

JR: So it was a large school.

AF: "He'd know the whole family history. He'd know all their names." So that's why I said I had great respect for him. Ninety-eight years old, what do you expect? Some of the seventy-year-old people can't remember from yesterday what to do. Really.

JR: If you had a problem you could just knock on his door . . .

AF: Yeah.

JR: . . . sit down and . . .

AF: And make an appointment with him. And he was easy to talk to. But as I said, you never got anything resolved. There at Waimea we had a yearly money-raising project—we called it the Waimea High School Festival—to raise money for different kinds of equipment, I think. And the first year I was there he made me chairman, so I had a lot of leeway. We put on a good program. My roommate was the physical education teacher. She now lives in the back house [behind AF's present house]. She's Korean. She was single at that time. And she was the one who got her four years of education at Huron College. She stayed four years in South Dakota and didn't have any money to come home in between so she used to work at the girls' camp. So she had a lot of good ideas, some of the cute little dances that she had with her girls and some of the boys. So we put on a good program in this school—we had a school auditorium. And we raised money, enough money. And the second year he also put me in charge of the Waimea festival, so I had two years of that. Of course, I stayed there only two years, and I was fortunate to get to town.

JR: Where did you live while you were teaching there?

AF: We lived in the teachers' cottage the first year. There were eight of us, two to a room. And, oh, I never had it so good. We hired a girl in the community, a Japanese girl, who was our maid. She did the cleaning every day, she fixed our beds, she fixed breakfast, lunch, and dinner for us every day. We were right on the campus, so we'd just go home for lunch. And she had Sundays off, so Sunday we either had breakfast out or prepared our own, or sometimes we went on picnics. And I played for a church group there. There was a young minister, and I would play for his services at the community church. And once a week, on Monday evenings I remember, there was a CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp. You

know, a CCC camp? [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt had these camp[s] where they reforested areas. And there was a CCC camp up at Koke'e. Have you ever been to Kaua'i?

JR: I've been there, but I haven't been to Koke'e.

AF: Way up Koke'e there was this CCC camp. And so every Monday evening, this young Baptist minister would drive my roommate and me, because I played the piano for his services, and we'd have dinner there with the boys. And then he'd conduct the service, and we'd have songs, the hymnals. And then every Sunday I would play for him at—they had the Waimea Christian Church and then they had another community church, so I would play for them there. He was a bachelor, and so some Sunday mornings, early in the morning, we'd go to the beach. He had the car. We'd go to the beach and have a picnic there. Most of the members in the cottage would join us for that. So it was really nice.

JR: Now, you were married at that time . . .

AF: Mm hm. I had my daughter, Robin, that's the second one.

JR: So did they have to live in Honolulu?

AF: They lived in Honolulu. So my husband stayed with my mother, and his mother kind of took care of Robin. His mother and his sisters took care of Robin. And then weekends he'd either come up, or we'd go by boat. And then the plane started, so on holidays—long holiday weekends—either he'd come up or I'd come home.

But it was a nice community. Waimea was a nice community. They had a community association, they had a community hall. We even put up, with the community, an operetta. And there were basketball games in this community hall, and there were lots of places where you could go hiking safely on that island. So I really enjoyed my two-year stay there.

JR: Now, you went to the big Honolulu high school, McKinley. How did going to more of a country school . . .

AF: It wasn't a small school. It was a large school, because they had—the enrollment was high since they had from the elementary through high school. They didn't have as many subjects, I would say, as in [McKinley] High School, but the classes were about the same size, they weren't any smaller. And the kids were---again, they were serious kids. They were good kids. Nobody goofed off at Waimea High School. I don't remember anybody. I never had any disciplinary problem with any of the kids. They were good kids. Even at Farrington [High School]—when I came to Farrington, of course, they did have some. From there I came to Farrington because they needed . . .

JR: After two years you came to . . .

AF: Yeah. One of my friends there—my mother's friend, really—had started the Hawaiian instruments class. Farrington had just started. And her classes were so popular they needed another Hawaiian instruments class. So she knew I was out teaching, she knew I could play the ukulele, and so she got permission from the principal to have me come in. And at that

time it was—well, you couldn't get to Honolulu otherwise. It was hard to get to Honolulu from the neighbor islands. That's why so many of my own classmates at McKinley who went out to teach from normal school, they stayed out in the country seven, eight years. So they got married and made their homes on the neighbor islands. But I was fortunate, I came back to town, right in town. So I had Hawaiian instruments classes, and then again I had a sophomore English/social studies class. They called it core studies at that time. I had one class of that, and the rest of the classes were in Hawaiian instruments.

But there, again, even at Farrington, you had all the local kids, no Caucasian kids. All the local kids. You had Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, part Hawaiians. And I didn't have any disciplinary problems within the class, but I remember one year one of the Filipino kids was gambling under one of the bungalows, and so I turned him in for that. But that's the most serious problem I ever had with anybody, I think.

Another time one of the Japanese boys who had been—oh, later on at Farrington they started the big carnivals and we used to put on big carnival shows. I had a carnival show, and Mrs. [Lorna] Burger had her own carnival show. We had about at least four carnival shows going on besides all the side concessions. And the kids were so talented, musically and vocally and dramatically, that we could put on these. I remember the first year I had a Wild West show. The second year I had like a Carmen Miranda show. I had one of the girls who later on became a professional singer, and she was so good. And I think I had only two years of carnival, because then the war [i.e., World War II] came on.

You know, there used to be a Princess Theater on Fort Street. They've since demolished that building. But every Saturday night they would have different groups put on a show. And they were paid for putting on the show. One way of, I guess, organizations to earn money. And so my carnival segment—we were going to put on a show on the Saturday night and Sunday morning they had that bombing of Pearl Harbor. So we had our show. Our show went on, and then that was it.

And then we went into—at Farrington we went into double schedule. We had classes in the morning and then another group of classes in the afternoon. We couldn't use the whole campus because they were using the cafeteria to take care of the wounded. They set it up as a hospital. And so we had two shifts. And I taught in the afternoon shift, and Mrs. Burger, who had the other Hawaiian instruments classes, taught the morning shift. And that's when I had to teach a class in commercial training, even though I didn't have a background in that. That was just simple commercial business. And we had a textbook for that, so that was okay. But I remember during those years they had trenches built, dug out trenches, and there were practice air raids where we had to go into these trenches for protection. But we still carried on the May Day program, I remember. We always had a big—and Farrington to this day always has a big outdoor May Day program. There was one in the morning, and I had one in the afternoon. We put on a May Day program.

JR: I've talked to other teachers, and they said that during—especially immediately after Pearl Harbor, they had to do other things for the state—I mean, for the territory.

AF: That's right. Like, I worked in an identification section down at where Thomas Jefferson School is, fingerprinting the citizens. They had to come in to be fingerprinted. Everybody had

to have an ID [identification card], and that's where we fingerprinted them. And some of them, they were sent out to the rural areas. Where they couldn't come in, they were sent out to the rural areas. But I don't remember doing that. I remember just staying in the office here and fingerprinting people. Some people went to Pearl Harbor to work as clerks. Some people went to work in the pineapple fields to supervise students who had to work in the pineapple fields, but I never had to do that.

That was an interesting time, staying months through blackouts. You couldn't have a car. I'm glad we weren't living here, we'd have so many windows. We lived in a small cottage in Kapahulu, and there were not too many windows to black out. And right next door was a Japanese-language school, and they had national guardsmen on duty right over there. So we felt pretty safe where we were.

JR: The national guardsmen were there to . . .

AF: Because of the Japanese-language school, they had to keep an eye on—I don't know.

JR: So they were just like supervising . . .

AF: I think they discontinued. . . . Yeah, just to supervise the building or to man the building. Because it was a pretty large building. Today they use it for senior citizen activities.

I remember standing in line. That's when you felt you had to have certain things. Neither my husband nor I cared for any alcoholic beverages, but at that time you had to stand in line to buy a bottle of liquor. So because you had to—you know, it was rationed—we stood in line so we could buy a bottle of liquor for somebody else, maybe, because we didn't use it ourselves. Standing in line for buying poi, I remember doing that. And then one of my teacher friends, her husband belonged to the national guard unit, and he had to serve. But he could get Hershey bars, and oh, you couldn't buy that in the stores. And that was such a treat to get one Hershey bar. You really appreciated that.

JR: They had some sort of ration coupon system?

AF: Yes, yes, rationing for different kinds of staples. But it wasn't that difficult. We managed. We got a lot of things that in other war areas they would be without. The hardest thing was having to black out your house every evening, not being able to go out at all. You couldn't drive out at night at all. So that lasted—it seemed like a long time, but I don't think it was more than—I don't know how long it was.

JR: Do you remember if there was a sense of fear? Or did people . . .

AF: In the beginning, when we'd hear the—what is it—the bullet in the distance (AF makes a noise like a bomb). And right in our neighborhood there was one of those that fell, but it wasn't even very close to us.

JR: But that's during the actual . . .

AF: The combat, yeah. In the beginning days, in the beginning stages.

JR: But after that, when you had to black out at night . . .

AF: When they removed that, then it was okay. One of our teachers, the same Mrs. [Lorna] Burger who got me to Farrington, she played piano for the USO [United Service Organizations] group so she would go to the different bases, and I think she enjoyed that.

JR: And you mentioned the split schedule at school. Were they still teaching most of the subjects?

AF: Mm hm, mm hm. So that's why some of us had to teach something that we were not really—we didn't really have the background for. But I guess they were able to fit in people in some of the other subjects where you had to know, like science courses. They had enough to split them.

JR: So someone who was in school at that point, you don't necessarily feel that they lost anything?

AF: Many of the boys enlisted in the army. They left school to enlist in the army. No, I don't think they felt any loss there. The ones who were maybe planning to go to college, they were able to keep up their college courses, as far as I can figure out, because they went on. And the ones who joined the army, later on they had their GI Bill, so they were able to get whatever further education they needed. All of them did very well.

JR: I think I'm just going to stop the tape.

AF: Okay.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 21-10-1-91; SIDE ONE

JR: How long did you stay at Farrington?

AF: At least eight years. See, I was at Waimea for two years and about eight years at Farrington. Then my husband got into the contracting business. And he was doing pretty well, so he said, "Oh, maybe you should take a year off." So I took a year off. And then, I think maybe I got bored, not having anything regular to do during that year off, so I went back. But I had resigned from Farrington when I took off. And when I went back, when I reapplied—because I had the elementary school certificate, too—there was an opening at Kūhiō School. Oh, I did some substituting first, and then I was offered a permanent position at Kūhiō School. So I had the fifth grade there, which I took. I stayed there for about eight years.

I had about three different principals at that school. The first one was Miss Reid, and then there was an exchange principal. I don't remember his name. Oh no, the very first one was—Miss Weatherbee, I think, was her name. She was a good, strict principal who had standards to follow, even in report cards. She would go through the report cards, especially the comments that teachers wrote, and she would make comments on the report cards. She

went through our plan books, too, and she would read every plan book. So her standards were high. And it's good to work for people like that, because you know what you're aiming for and you know what is expected of you, and you carry out those expectations.

Then we had a Mr. Shimizu. He was very nice. The thing I remember about him, he couldn't stand fresh flowers. He was allergic to fresh flowers, and he'd get deathly sick when he got a fresh flower lei. So when we found that out, we used to give him paper leis. At that time they had crepe paper leis. Give him a crepe paper lei, don't have to make fresh flower lei. He was a very nice person. I got along with every one of my principals.

JR: You didn't have any objections to people looking over your plan or anything?

AF: No, because they were the boss. No, I didn't feel intimidated. In fact, I felt, well, they're helping us. And you learn from any suggestions that they may write in your plan book. So I had the fifth grade there. And there we rotated. When I say rotated, one year we'd have the top kids—they were homogeneously set up. And there were two of us [teaching] fifth grade. One year we'd have the good class, the upper section, and then one year we'd have the lower section, all the low section. So I remember . . .

JR: All together?

AF: All together in one class. They weren't mixed up. In a way, I think that's good, because you're dealing with one type of children, and so you can set your plans up for that particular group of children. But I tell you, when you have the lowest, you really have to have a lot of patience to work with them because they were mentally very slow. They couldn't catch on. And then if you were used to a group of accelerated youngsters, you'd feel frustrated at times. How are you going to help these kids?

There was one little Portuguese boy, such a nice kid. When I think about it, he really should have had better help than I could give him. He couldn't read. And I didn't know how to help him. And Miss Weatherbee was not the principal at that time, it was somebody else. So you couldn't go to them to ask how to help the child. But when it came to putting things together, like putting a bird cage—he gave me a little parakeet. But he knew how to put the cage together. How did he do it? He couldn't read. I never thought about it at that time, but now that I think about it, I wish I could have helped him a little bit more. I've never seen him [since then]. I don't know what he finally did. When you read about kids now being so frustrated, they get into trouble later on.

Then I had a combination fifth- and sixth-grade class. They were such a pleasurable group to have. We had a cottage all to ourselves on the campus. The principal let us have a cottage, so it was a self-contained room. So I worked them up into teams. They chose their own teams, they had captains, and they worked for credit, for scores, who could amass the greatest number of scores. The ones who set up a little garden outside were given extra credit. One group made curtains for the room, because this was like a cottage. So they made curtains for the room. They kept the place—we didn't have to worry about hiring cleaners. In those days, the children would clean the classrooms and thought nothing about it. Their parents didn't object. They felt that they were getting some training. So the kids would keep the classroom clean, floors swept and mopped, and then our sink clean. We even had our own little toilet,

our own little rest room. They kept that clean, too. And one group even put up a puppet show. I was so proud of them. They put up a nice puppet show.

JR: Why did you get a little cottage?

AF: Because I had the accelerated group, I mean, the top kids. And they asked me if I would like the cottage. I said, "Sure, I'll take the cottage." So we were all by ourselves. We weren't bothered by. . . . We followed the same schedule—go to recess at the same time, go to the cafeteria at the same time—but we were by ourselves, and we could do whatever we wanted in our classroom. And I had a mixed group. I still remember, I had a couple of Caucasian kids in the class and more Japanese kids, really nice kids. I enjoyed that class thoroughly. One of them is now teaching art at McKinley. I don't know where the rest of them are. I used to see another one who played—what did she play—the flute. When she was in junior high school she would play the flute, and I knew her mother and father. And those kids somehow---their families were the more affluent ones, the more educated ones, so maybe genetically they were better prepared or what. But oh, that's one class I really enjoyed. Another retarded class that I had, I remember one little *Haole* boy. He used to give me so much trouble! Now, what kind of trouble did he give? He couldn't do his work, he wouldn't do his work. He was a tiny little thing, too. Now I feel so sorry for him. I don't know whatever—I think his first name was Jack. (Chuckles)

JR: How did you---you mentioned that class where you had the very lowest students and the very highest students in the same room.

AF: No, no, no.

JR: They weren't in the same room?

AF: No, no, no.

JR: Oh, okay.

AF: The lowest group was all by itself.

JR: Okay, so you taught them in one room and you had the other . . .

AF: That was another year. The whole year you were stuck with the slow group.

JR: Oh, so then you'd have them one year, but the payoff would be that you'd get the advanced kids . . .

AF: Yes, yes, mm hm.

JR: . . . some other year.

AF: Mm hm.

JR: Oh, I see.

AF: Some people prefer working with a slow group all the time. I had one friend who didn't mind working—well, she knew how to help them, I guess. And she had the patience for them, and maybe she had the proper training—how to deal with them—so she preferred having the slow kids. But I liked this rotation bit. It was fair for the other teachers who didn't want to be with the slow kids the whole year. But it was a pleasure to have the top kids. I could have had them forever. (Chuckles)

Then another time, at the same Kūhiō School, the teachers in the upper level—I had only the upper-level fifth and sixth graders—they didn't want to teach music. So they asked me if I would take their classes and teach their classes the music that was required. And I said, "Sure, I'll take them." So they would take care of my class while I took their classes for music.

JR: So this was just part of the day, then, that you'd switch?

AF: Yeah, yeah. Just one period of the day for music.

JR: How big were the classes back then? Do you remember?

AF: Gee, between thirty to forty, no less than that. But there again, we didn't have any so-called disciplinary problems.

JR: Why do you think that when I grew up and today there are disciplinary problems?

AF: I wonder if---I can see where in some cases, depending on the district you're in, what we call the transients, they move around so much. They don't feel like a part of that neighborhood. And maybe the parents have a lot of problems themselves, and so they don't pay attention to—oh, I don't know about your background—but they don't pay attention to the kids. There's so much distraction nowadays for the kids. I mean, there's TV, there are all kinds of things that kids can—they seem to have money to go to. . . . So their minds are not on their lessons or to get ahead.

But if you have the immigrant kids—like I had a friend who taught at McKinley. She enjoyed especially the Asian immigrant kids. They are so serious about—their parents have instilled in them, "You must get an education. You must get an education." So those kids are the serious ones, and they really do their work. And they go beyond doing their work, so she can depend on them for a lot of extra things to do.

JR: How did you get along with parents when you were a teacher? I'm sure you must have had parent-teacher meetings or . . .

AF: I've had a good relationship with parents. Going back to---oh, after Kūhiō School, then I took another year off, just took a year off. I resigned again. When I went back the openings were in the intermediate school, so that's how I got to Dole Intermediate. And that's where I stayed for twelve years. See, I was at Kūhiō for eight years, and when I went to Dole I stayed there until I retired.

I'll give you one instance with one of the parents I had there. This little Japanese kid, he was

a sassy little kid. And he was in my last period class. Evidently, he didn't want to do something. And he was supposed to come and get his books by a certain time, and he didn't come and I couldn't keep on waiting for him so I locked the door. When he finally came he was so sassy that I said, "Well, tough!"

(Laughter)

AF: I wouldn't let him get his book. So he went home and complained to his mother. And his mother called up the vice-principal, "What's the matter with that Mrs. Fern? She won't let my boy get his book!"

So the vice-principal came to me and said, "I've got some problem with one of the parents."

So he explained, and I said, "Okay."

He said, "Do you want to talk to her?"

And I said, "Sure." So I talked to her over the phone, and I said, "You know, what would you do if your boy came back to you and sassed you, because he had sassed me on something. And so I said, 'Well, tough. You're not going to get your books.' "

And so she said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. He didn't tell me that." And the next day she brought a little gift to me, and that kid behaved himself the rest of the time. He didn't sass me back at all. (Laughs) So you have to talk to the parents. The kids will go home and tell one story, and if the parents believe 'em hook, line, and sinker, they don't get the teacher's point of view. So I always feel that when somebody tells me anything about somebody, I want to hear the other point of view, too. You get two points of views, you get two stories. Really. (Laughs)

JR: You weren't necessarily a strict—let me ask, were you a strict teacher?

AF: Yes, I required discipline in the room. I mean, like they can't chew gum in their class, and they know that. I set up the rules in the beginning—no gum chewing in class. And some of the rules they help me to decide what they could do and what they couldn't do, so we worked things out like that. So outside of that, I had pretty good kids. Some of the Samoan kids, yeah—there was one girl I remember who, I think, got a little bit out of hand. And so I took her aside and talked to her. And after that, it was okay. And at least one of the things that they mentioned was that I was fair with them. I could be strict, but I was fair with them. I could listen to them.

At Dole I had some of the top kids for the newswriting class. I didn't have a background for newswriting but, again, the teacher who was supposed to take it refused to take it. So the vice-principal said, "Will you take it?"

And then he gave me some fringe benefits, so I said, "Okay, I'll try it."

JR: What is newswriting?

AF: To put up the school newspaper, to go out and get the news. And you know, if you teach

English, in the English textbook in each English class you always have a section, how to teach them to write. And so I figured, well, I could do that. This is only junior high school. And at that time, Mei Li Chung, who was at McKinley High School—she was from Virginia. She's a Chinese girl. She has this Virginia accent. She really hasn't lost it. A cute person. Well, she was given the school newspaper and the annual, and she didn't have a background in that either. So what she did—she was smart. She organized workshops for teachers of newswriting classes. And evidently a large group of us didn't have the background either. So I took all the workshops, and I learned from that. And then I had my newswriting class join the School Journalism Association, and they conducted workshops for the students. And I would go along, and I'd learn along with them, too.

And that was one of the nicest benefits, because I could ask for top kids. I said, "You can't give me kids that can't write or can't read. You gotta give me the top kids." So these would be the top ninth graders. And it was good to work with them, because you'd just give them a suggestion and they'd go right ahead and do it on their own. I had some really excellent kids. One of them is assistant city editor for the [*Honolulu*] *Advertiser,* Sandra Oshiro. I've often wanted to write a note to Sandee and congratulate her on what she was doing. I saw her on TV recently with some program, she was on the panel. It was pre-election kind of thing, I think.

JR: Was that the debates or something like that?

AF: Yeah, yeah. And then there was this Greg Takayama who worked in [Senator Daniel] Inouye's office in Washington, D.C. He was my sports editor. He always wrote well. His mother worked in the cafeteria, and she always spoke well. You know, some of these cafeteria people don't have the background, but his mother—I always respected her. But her son, Greg, he did very well. I remember telling him one time, "You should write some of the editorials." I even had some of them try writing editorials.

And in this SCOOP organization, they used to have competitions among the students who belonged. And we'd have an annual weekend together where they had a competition right there, where you know that nobody is helping them, they are writing on their own. And so I think Sandee was one of those that won one of the competitions. In fact, when she graduated from Dole she won one of the Dole Diplomat Awards for being an outstanding student.

The first year that I had the newswriting class, the girl that was in the class was Alice [Nunogawa]—she's Alice what now? Anyway, she is now a teacher, and she does the *Farrington Foundation* [*Newsletter*], that's the alumni association newsletter, so I get to see her at the annual foundation meetings.

So I learned a lot doing this newswriting class. And one of the outstanding years [was] when they had their association meeting at the Kāhala Hilton. It was during a slack season for tourists. There's a slack season during the year, and this was around like in the fall. And the kids had the opportunity to spend two nights at the Kāhala Hilton paying only twenty-one dollars. So I told my kids, I said, "You know, this is an opportunity. This is a good hotel." I said, "You never can go to any hotel for only twenty-one dollars." And I said, "Ask your parents if you can have the money to attend this conference." And so I had, I think, about twenty kids that signed up for it. And then, being advisor, I was also invited to be there,

because you had to be there with your kids. I had a room all to myself—a big room, pineapple on the table, an orchid on the bed with a piece of chocolate. Oh, it was really nice, and the kids enjoyed it. We had our meals there, they had their competition there.

I had one boy whose father had a photography business—Kimura, up in Kalihi—and now the son runs the photography shop. He was a little rascal. But he did our pictures for the paper. We had our little Polaroid camera, and we had some other things. So he used to do the pictures for the paper. In fact, we won one award at one conference. And this was only a junior high competing. Well, we competed among the junior high schools, and then they had the high school section, too. So my kids always did very well. They always won in some kind of competition, some kind of writing. But they were good kids, not because of me, but they were good kids. They had the ability. And so I always---like there was another teacher, Trude Akau, I don't know whether you ever . . .

JR: Yeah, I know of her.

AF: You heard of her? She taught at Kalihi Elementary. And I used to know her occasionally, but when she retired, she and I belonged on the [O'ahu Retired Teachers Association] board, and I got to know her real well. And she always said, "Kalihi kids can write." In fact, she wrote a little book, *Kalihi Kids Can* [*Communicate*]. She and I have the same feeling about Kalihi kids, that there's a lot of good, talented kids among them. You know, in the paper you hear only about the negative things about Kalihi kids being from such a bad area, from the housing, always getting into trouble. And when people used to tell me—they used to feel sorry for me when I said I was at Dole.

"Where is Dole?"

I said, "Up Kam [IV Road]."

Something like, "Poor thing, you."

And I said, "Not poor thing me." I said, "I got good kids there. I'd rather have those kids than some of the sassy kids in some of the other areas." When they get into trouble it's crude kind of trouble. I mean, it's easier to handle. But some of the kids in other schools, from what I hear from other teachers, sophisticated kind of troublemakers. I wouldn't like to handle those types. I don't know whether you were—were you a troublemaker in school?

JR: No, no.

AF: How come?

JR: Oh, I don't know. (Chuckles)

AF: Was it in you, or was it your parents?

JR: I had an older brother who was a troublemaker, so I think I saw what kind of results it got, if you know what I mean.

AF: Why was he a troublemaker?

JR: I don't know. I have two older brothers. They were both troublemakers, I guess. One was more sophisticated than the other.

AF: Were they bored? They didn't have enough challenges?

JR: The one I'm thinking of in particular, he was just restless I think.

AF: Sometimes when kids are bored, those are the ones that get into trouble, don't you think?

JR: Yeah, I think when he was very young he was almost hyperactive. It was that kind of situation. So as he got older he was still very antsy and restless and was always getting his nose into something.

AF: How did your parents deal with it?

JR: I don't remember. I seem to remember he was the one who got the scolding. The older one, the more . . .

AF: No spankings?

JR: Yeah. The more sophisticated one, he'd get into trouble, but I think he was more sly about it.

AF: Mm hm. That's the kind I wouldn't be able to deal with.

JR: Whereas the restless one, he was . . .

AF: More open?

JR: Yeah. He was the one they suspected first, and they were usually right.

(Laughter)

AF: Yeah, like we had a lot of Samoan kids. And some of them can be pretty nasty. But you just tell 'em, "Oh, we'll let your chief know." They tow the line. But they're open in their so-called discipline—I mean, when they want to get into trouble, they're so open about it. For me it's easy to talk to them and handle them that way.

JR: When you were a student, you mentioned that the teachers were almost all *Haole*.

AF: Every one of them. Every one of my teachers was a *Haole* teacher.

JR: You're not *Haole*, or you may be part *Haole*, but . . .

AF: I have a little bit, yeah. But at that time we never thought about—racial ancestry never occurred to us. We just accepted it.

JR: But what I'm curious to find out about is the transition. At some point, things changed. Were you part of that first wave, so to speak, of non-*Haole* teachers that began teaching?

AF: Well, I never had any non-*Haole* teacher, if that's what you're after. It's only---let's see, in workshops you may have maybe a non-*Haole* lecturer. That's the only time that I've had somebody as a lecturer being non-*Haole*. But I never thought about it.

JR: When you were at the university, were your classmates mostly *Haole* or mixed?

AF: All mixed, yeah. We had a good mixture, the same mixture that I had in high school. See, you had the same ones going up to the—that's where the private school people attended, the University of Hawai'i, because that was the only one here. And those who could afford to send their kids away, well, we never saw them again. But the ones who couldn't—at that time I guess you had to be able to afford to send your kids away to college. And not many of them were going for scholarships, so a lot of them attended the local university. That was the only place they could go to.

JR: So do you think that people at your age were essentially the first local group that became teachers?

AF: No, my mother's age group, they started going out into the elementary schools. In the elementary schools, especially on the neighbor islands, they had the local teachers, because the first Caucasians they brought in preferred to be in town. And only in some of the neighbor island schools where they couldn't get anybody they brought in the Caucasians.

Like I remember Dallas McLaren. A large group of them came one year, and the first place they were sent to was Hilo. So McLaren and a large group of his peers—his associates—all taught in Hilo, and then they branched out as principals to the other islands. He went to Kaua'i, and maybe some of them went to Maui. And then they finally gathered here [on O'ahu]. Walton Gordon, for instance, was another associate of Dallas McLaren. He came here to Central Intermediate, and I had him at Farrington after Mr. [Thomas] Vance left Farrington. So I've had, also in principals, only Caucasian principals—oh, except for Mr. Shimizu at Kūhiō School. But, you know, race never entered my mind.

JR: Yeah, but it seems . . .

AF: Because they had the background. And so I never thought about them as racially different. But today now, at the university, you have a lot of Oriental professors.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

AF: Do you have any?

JR: When I was at the university?

AF: Yeah.

JR: Sure, sure.

AF: Did you have any---I mean, what did you think when you first had them?

JR: Well, I went to high school here, so it wasn't a shock or anything like that.

AF: You had Oriental teachers in high school?

JR: Yeah, yeah.

AF: And you didn't think about it at that time, did you?

JR: No, no.

AF: It's the same way.

JR: I think if you come from the Mainland to Hawai'i . . .

AF: You notice the difference more?

JR: Well, I think at first you become conscious of it. You know, on the Mainland it's so easy to take being a *Haole* or whatever just for granted. It's like everybody's *Haole*, right? If you live in a neighborhood, there isn't that much mixing, so to speak.

AF: Yeah. But once you have a non-Caucasian teacher, you don't think about his racial background. You're impressed by his own intellectual background.

JR: Sure, sure.

AF: So that's why race has nothing to do with it.

JR: I think when you're a student you're probably more impressed by whether or not you like them or not. (Chuckles)

AF: Yeah, yeah, right.

JR: Whether or not you think they give too much homework or . . .

(Laughter)

JR: . . . or they let you talk to your friend in class or . . .

AF: Or if they show signs of partiality. You know, some of them outwardly show they have certain pets. Certain kids can get away with things that other kids can't get away with—teacher's pet.

JR: You never did that?

AF: No, I tried not to. On the outside I may have been more friendly with some of those that, again, were as friendly as I wanted them to be, but it was not until after we left school. Like,

going back to high school kids, one thing, you're not so far apart in age, say, that you remember them and they remember you when they leave school. So like Waimea High School students, even though they were not in the graduating class they have reunions. And they ask some of us who are still around to their reunions. We spend weekends with them on the neighbor island, if we can go to the neighbor island. Or many of them have moved to Honolulu, so they have their reunions here. And they often ask us to join them. And we join them, and we have such a good time with them.

Farrington High School, for instance, one Sunday in March, the class of '41—that's the war year class—they have a reunion every year. That's a jazzy class. I guess they have established themselves. They go to Las Vegas for reunions, they go to the neighbor islands. But they always ask a group of us to join them for Christmas. They have a get-together at Christmas, usually at Hale Koa [Hotel], sometimes at the Honolulu Country Club at Salt Lake. They're having a reunion in March, and they've asked a group of us to join 'em. This is down at the country club at Salt Lake. In the past, many of their—oh, the Christmas reunion has been at noon, and the evening reunions were at Hale Koa. At Hale Koa it's easier to drive to. But the one that they're going to have at the country club, I said, "I won't drive down there at night now."

JR: To Salt Lake?

AF: Yeah. I said, "Daytime I can drive there but not at night." So one of them said she'll pick four of us up. So I said, "Fine, I'll go." So we get together with them. And then the class of '42 has its reunion, and we often get asked to them. The class of '43 has a reunion to which they ask us, so we join them. And many of them are grandparents now. Some of them are bald. They're grayer than we are. (Laughs) So it's lots of fun to get together with them.

JR: Does the class of '28 have a reunion?

AF: My class, we've been meeting every year. I mean, a lot of the kids in my class didn't go on to college, the boys I'm talking about. They had to go to work. This was just around the Depression years—'28, '29, '30—so they went to work. And then they formed a group that started getting together every month. And quite a few of them married classmates, so their wives are class of '28. They used to go on picnics. They had good times together.

Well, let's see, my husband died in 1960. Right after that they started inviting the widows. They started meeting in the evenings. They had a dinner meeting once a month. And when I became a widow they asked me to come and join them, and I used to drive to these dinner meetings. Then I started playing for one of the churches, and I said, "I can't come." They used to meet on a Wednesday evening, and I said, "I can't come on a Wednesday evening because they have choir practice." So they purposely changed their meeting to a Tuesday evening so I would go. Whenever I was free I'd go and join them. And then they started losing original members, losing them through death. And so they started inviting other male members of the class who had gone on to the university. And they still meet every month. Every month we meet. I join them when I can.

And then we have big reunions like twenty-fifth reunion and thirtieth reunion, where we have the whole class, as many as we can get. One of the wives who is a classmate, she kept a

record of all the classmates. We had about 400 people who graduated in the class of '28. She kept a record of the deceased and where the others are, and she would write to them and invite them or tell them about the reunion. So we've had good, big reunions, where we'd have about a couple of hundred of them with their spouses.

And then finally, some of them said, "We can't come out at night. Why don't you have a luncheon meeting?" So finally this past summer the old, original diehards—they can't drive at night either—they finally consented to have daytime lunches, and we've been having it mostly at King's Garden [Restaurant]. These fellows in the class, they liked the night meetings. We almost always went to Yong Sing [Restaurant], because they had a special price there, and then also they could bring their own drinks. They still could drink. And they like to bring their own liquor. They didn't have to pay for the corkage fee, they could bring their own stuff. So that's why they were meeting [at night] every month. But now that they can't drink, they're willing to meet daytime. So we're still meeting daytime. And now it's down to about three tables, but again, some of them are guests and some of them are spouses. But we're getting more of the widows in the group, so it's fun. And some of them, they bring their grown-up children to fill in the spaces. So we have one couple whose son always joins us. He's a big fellow, he likes to eat. Another one, who lost her husband—both of them were classmates, and he was one of the original members. She lost him a few years ago. So she brings her son and his wife when we were meeting at night so she could get a ride, because she doesn't drive—bring her son and his wife and another son and his wife. So she'd bring four of them, altogether five of them. But now that they meet daytime she can come by bus once in a while.

JR: I need to just stop it one more time. We're almost *pau*.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JR: When did you retire?

AF: I retired in 1972. I remember that date because I keep referring to it. I gotta remember that date. Some dates stand out in my mind, others don't. But I retired in 1972, so that makes it—this June it'll be how many years? Nineteen years, right? And I've enjoyed every bit of it.

JR: The retirement or the teaching?

AF: I enjoyed my teaching. I didn't miss it because I did substitute for two years after I retired. See, I retired just before I was going to be sixty-two, and that's when you get your social security. So I substituted for two years. But at that time we could call the shots. I said I only wanted to go to Dole Intermediate School. I know what substitutes have to go through when they go to a strange school. You know how the kids act up. I said, "No, I'll go only to Dole," because I knew they needed substitutes there. I said, "I know the program, I know the setup. I'll feel comfortable there." So I substituted for several different teachers at Dole. And when you are in control of the situation, you can accomplish more than if they're running all

over you like they do. You hear about people. I know other substitutes have come to Dole, and the kids have a grand time. They know which ones they can control themselves.

JR: Why does that happen, do you think?

AF: Why does it happen?

JR: Yeah.

AF: Depending on the kind of kids you have, if the teacher. . . . I think if their regular teacher has a good program in the class—they know just what to do, they know what is expected of them—they will do the work regardless of who comes in. See, the classes that I substituted for, some of them were well organized. And you had no problem with the kids. They knew what to do, and they weren't trying to put it over on the teacher. And it goes back to the kind of teacher that they had. In other classes---well, I never went to any one where the kids. . . . Because I was in control of the situation there—I knew what to do—I never had the other experience. But I can imagine that where you had, maybe, very poor discipline in the classroom, where you had an unstructured kind of class, or maybe where you had it too strict, the kids felt that they needed a holiday, they would try to put it over on whoever came in . . .

JR: Yeah, yeah.

AF: . . . and get away with it. So I did it for two years, and then I stopped. And then Mrs. Akita—she's another Dole teacher—she retired about that time, and she said, "Go back into substituting. They're paying you a lot now."

And so I said, "Okay."

So I went to apply and fill out all the applications. And they said, "Okay." Then when they looked down at my age—oh, by that time I was just about seventy, I guess. And they said, "No, we can't hire you," because of my age.

So I told the teachers, "We can do a lot of volunteer work. If they want us to volunteer in the classroom it's okay, but if they're going to pay us, we're too old." I said, "Forget it." Then later on she said then they started hiring anybody after seventy, and I said, "No, never mind. I'm already involved in too many other things. I don't want to give my other . . ."

JR: They missed their chance.

(Laughter)

AF: Says you. (Laughs)

JR: I know that you're involved with the O'ahu Retired Teachers Association [ORTA] now. What exactly do you do for them?

AF: Well, I started out---when I first retired in '72, Rose Horner was president of the Hawai'i

State Retired Teachers Association. That's a step above the O'ahu Retired Teachers [Association]. And she said, "Amy, come and join us." And she said. . . . What did she say? She offered me a committee job.

And I said, "Okay."

And at that time—at the end of the year, when we retired—they invited us to a luncheon. The O'ahu Retired Teachers Association invited us to a luncheon. And I signed up right away, and I paid my life membership dues, because I got my money out lump sum, and I thought I'm going to outlast this membership period so I'll pay my life membership dues, which was a hundred dollars at that time. I could afford a hundred dollars, paid it off. I haven't regretted it since. The thing has been escalating, and you don't have to worry about every year are you current or not. I wish I had done that with a lot of the other organizations to which I still belong and I still have to remember to pay my yearly dues.

Well anyway, let's see. . . . I joined the Hawai'i State Retired Teachers Association, I mean the whole thing, and I became recording secretary for the state association. And I did that for about three or four years. And then I accepted the corresponding secretary's job, and I did that for a couple of years. And so each time you're on the board you go to these conventions. So at that time, every other year we went to the neighbor islands for the convention. Then it got too expensive, because the O'ahu group was such a large group. Because of our membership we were allowed so many more delegates. And to pay for transportation—they were picking up the airfare—it was so costly. So they decided to have it once in every two years to go to the neighbor islands.

So when Fred Murashige became president—then I was no longer on the board—he said, "Okay, I'll make you publicity chairman so you still belong to the board."

I said, "Okay." Publicity chairman, you sent articles to the papers. They don't pay attention to little organizations unless you're paying big advertising fees, but I'd send my articles in, when we were going to meet and stuff like that. And so that was one year.

Then I finally retired from the state board. And then in the ORTA local board, I started as a membership chairman. And then I took over the newswriting because they needed somebody to do the newsletter, and nobody would do it. And I said, "You relieve me of the membership chairmanship, I'll take over the newswriting of the letter, the newsletter." So I've had it ever since. And I don't mind doing it, because otherwise I'd have to chair a committee. And I'd rather do [the newsletter] since I'm familiar with the setup. And I don't do the articles. The committee chairmen and the officers have to send in what they want to publicize, so I depend on them. And because we have a meeting every month and there's something going on all the time, I get the articles from them. Except for the pasting up and then filling in the program for the monthly meeting, some of the little things I fill in. But I feel comfortable with it. And they always tell me, "Well, why don't you have somebody work with you?"

And I say, "You know, when I do the paper it could be late at night. I'm sitting on my bed. I'm not going to ask a committee person to come and sit with me. I don't know when I need to work on this thing. It has to be on my own time."

JR: So do you . . .

AF: I used to do all the typing. And since I'm just a two-finger typist, I do the articles about two or three times to justify the columns. Now, I don't justify the columns, but I space it so that it fits. Then that used to slow me down. Now I'm fortunate, my granddaughter [Heather] who lives with me, she has a computer, so she does it. She does the typing for me. But sometimes I feel frustrated, because when I was doing the typing I know just how to fill it up or finish or shorten it to fill it in all the space. Now I have to just cut out and then paste it wherever it fits. So it has disadvantages, but the greatest advantage is she does it. She can type fast. And doing it on the computer, I just have to proofread it and set it around.

And then the thing is, you see, I have just a limited time to put out the newsletter. We have our board meeting on the first Wednesday. I set my deadline for the articles on that day. They have to have their articles ready. And then I read it that night, proofread it, edit it, and then I leave it for Heather to type up. And if she can do it that night, she does it. Otherwise, I have to wait till Thursday night when she is free, and she does it on her time. So I have to wait until that's done. And so that may take all night Thursday, and I get it Friday morning.

So Friday morning I have to go over it, proofread it again, cut it up, paste it up, and then I call the printers. And fortunately the printer will pick it up or the person—another member on the board who recommended the printer, he lives close to the printer. They live out Hawai'i Kai. He comes and picks up my pasted-up articles and takes it to the printer. So you see, I have to do it within a couple of days. That's why I can't have any last minute kind of articles. And if they have to, they'll bring it here on that Wednesday evening and leave it with me.

JR: Do you keep up to date on what the different retired teachers are doing? And do you have to . . .

AF: In the newsletter?

JR: Yeah.

AF: No, because we have too many other things to write about. Like somebody said one time, "Why don't we have an obit column?"

And I said, "I don't want an obit column in the paper." I said, "It gets too depressing because we lose so many." I said, "They can read the daily papers." In April we have our memorial service, and that's when we print all the names of the deceased. But we don't write up anything personal on them. The only personal things that I've really put in the paper is when somebody gets married at this late stage. And we've had weddings occasionally. And that's interesting, because life goes on. We don't want the endings of lives.

And then one of the older members—I don't know whether you know Roy Roberts. He lives in Arcadia [Retirement Residence] now. He's so good about collecting all these little fillers for me, jokes, you know. And evidently he subscribes to a lot of different papers, and he cuts out these cute little jokes. Some of them are real cute. And he always gives me an envelope full of them. So I never have to go looking for fillers, he has them for me. And then some other people, sometimes they have inspirational kinds of poems that they send me. And when

I have room, and if it's appropriate, I put in their little poems.

JR: Sounds like you're very busy.

AF: Yeah. And then I have to save time to work in the yard. I love my yard.

JR: It looks beautiful.

AF: Well, you know, this garden here—my two grandsons who live on the Mainland were here in January. One of them is married, and he has three children. His three children and his wife were here. We all lived in this house. And then my youngest grandson, who just got married, his wife was here. So with all of them here, they helped to keep up the big part of the yard. And so they took out a vine that was in the front, dug it up. And the youngest grandson went and bought all the bedding plants. And the whole family, even the little great-grandchildren, had a hand in putting in plants. So I tell them, I said, "This is the best thing you could have done for me, because I enjoy it every day. I keep it watered, I keep it weeded, I keep enjoying it."

And he said, "Have you had any tours?"

I said, "Yeah, I keep on inviting my friends to come and look at my garden."

(Laughter)

AF: And they envy me. He even got white ginger (corms) in one corner. He got these (corms) when they had a short visit to the Big Island. And ginger blossoms is one of my favorites, the ginger lei. He had planted some in his mother's little townhouse garden, and during the summer she saved enough flowers so that every other day she brings me a ginger lei.

JR: Oh wow.

AF: And it's so fragrant. And even when it dries it makes the whole house smell Hawaiian, Hawai'i.

(Laughter)

AF: Really. And then I meet with---I belong to a group where I'm the youngest. Can you believe it? They're much older than I am. I also belong to groups where I'm the oldest. And then I belong to a group where I'm in between. So I have to leave time for getting together with them, lunch once a month with one group, lunch once a month with another group. I do Meals on Wheels every Monday. I've been doing it for the last, I'd say, about twelve years. Every Monday is set aside for Meals on Wheels. I do the driving. I have a partner who delivers the meals to the client. But I drive all around in the—right now we have the Kapahulu-Kaimukī area. And I feel that as long as I can drive, I don't mind doing that. Because they really need people to help. They have waiting lists of people who need meals.

JR: So you're still very active.

AF: So far, yeah. Getting on, though. (Chuckles)

JR: Do you think most of the retired teachers are as—maybe not as active as you are, but do they tend to keep . . .

AF: But they are active. You know, we get requests from all kinds of people and organizations, help for this, help for that. We put these help wanted items in the newsletter, and if it reaches the right person, they're going to get help. If they don't get any response it means that they're busy.

I can tell you, our retired teachers, the ones who belong [to ORTA]—and I know them personally—they are babysitting—grandbabysitting, you know, or niece and nephew sitting. They may not be married. I have one friend who is not married, but she's babysitting her nieces and nephews. And then I have friends—retired teachers—who are taking care of spouses or relatives. And so they're tied down. They can't go out, they're just tied down.

Then I have friends who volunteer for the Foster [Botanic] Gardens regularly. There's another one who volunteers weekly for Bishop Museum in the botany department. There are those who work for their churches. They work regularly for their churches. There's one who works at the St. Francis Hospital Gift Shop. She's done that for the last—almost twenty years. Every Friday she goes there. There was one that used to work at the Kaiser Hospital volunteer desk for information. We have people who are docents at 'Iolani Palace.

We have teachers who may not be active in the retired teachers association but they are members. They join the senior citizen club within their area. They are counted on for the leadership roles. The others think that—I guess they feel intimidated or they feel that they are not qualified, so they expect the former teachers to assume the leadership roles. And they are very active that way. They are helping in those groups. And they're active in---there's another teacher who comes and helps me fold and label our monthly newsletters. Besides that, she helps out with the read-a-thon program. I don't know how often she does it, whether it's once a month or twice a month. She goes and reads to these children down in—it's an organized program down in (the) Nānākuli area, Wai'anae area. And she does that regularly. Her husband is an Elk, so as an auxiliary member she's helping with the Elk organization. And let's see what else they're involved in. See, those are just six things that I have mentioned that I can think of on the top of my head.

JR: Is teaching a good profession?

AF: For me it was a satisfying profession.

JR: If one of those great-grandchildren that helped you in the garden, if they were to come to you in the future and say, "Great-grandma, should I become a teacher?" What would you say?

AF: I would say that it depends on whether they like children, too. You have to like children. You have to be able to work with them. Some of them may not have the patience. Now, my daughter never wanted to teach. My granddaughter never wanted to teach. That's fine. They fit into their own niches. So whatever they feel comfortable in, whatever they are good at, too, whatever they want to do.

JR: Do you think being a teacher in Hawai'i is any different than being a teacher anywhere else?

AF: Well, you know, I did a little stint in 1958, when my daughter was living in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. And she was going to have her second child, and I took a year sabbatical leave. That's when I was at Kūhiō School. I took a year leave, and I went up to be with her. And while I was there, her father-in-law was superintendent of schools in Lebanon County. And in the winter season they needed substitute teachers. And he asked me if I would do it, and I said, "Sure." So I substituted one day in high school there and then one day in a junior high school. And I was apprehensive, you know, being the only Oriental in an all-White community. But I tell you, the kids were nice. And I guess I got them interested in Hawai'i, that I was from Hawai'i. And I told them something about Hawai'i. And they were very nice.

And I remember the time that I was at the high school it snowed all the time I was in the classroom. When I came out, my son-in-law—I had driven my son-in-law's car. It was snowed in. The high school kids just came along, and they helped to brush off the snow, and they got my car out so that I could get on the road again. So it was a wonderful experience. So I don't think there's any difference. And I've had occasion to meet with—we've had exchange teachers from the Mainland in our schools. And of course, in the beginning some of the kids would try to see if they could put one over on them. But if they were strong teachers they got along well with the kids. So it depends on the person, himself or herself, I think. You can go anyplace, and if you know what you're doing and if you like children—if you like working with young people—I think there can be an understanding, there can be mutual respect. You respect them, they respect you, too, in return. But the first thing is to like your job, to enjoy it.

JR: And you obviously liked yours.

AF: Yeah. (Chuckles)

JR: Well, thank you very much.

AF: You're welcome.

JR: It's been really . . .

AF: I may not have been the best teacher. They don't remember me for what I taught them, maybe, but we got along.

(Laughter)

JR: Thanks a lot.

AF: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN HAWAI'I

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